

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-4319**

April 5, 2021

Mr. Robert S. Adler  
Acting Chairman  
Consumer Product Safety Commission  
4330 East West Highway  
Bethesda, MD 20814

Dear Acting Chairman Adler:

I write to express my serious concern with a recent incident in my Congressional District where a toddler died after ingesting a button battery. 18-month-old Reese Hamsmith of Lubbock, Texas passed away after suffering burns to her throat, esophagus, and vocal cords from swallowing a button battery. As a parent of three young children, I cannot imagine how devastating this has been for the Hamsmiths, and I believe it warrants a serious review of what safety requirements are currently in place to prevent button battery ingestions.

According to the National Capital Poison Control Center, up to 3,500 people of all ages swallow button batteries each year. Your Commission released a report on March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021 outlining the uptick of button battery ingestions by young children (ages 5-9) during the COVID-19 pandemic in the US. Your report found that "ER-treated injuries related to button batteries rose by 93% among young children" from 858 ingestions in 2019 to an estimated 1,654 ingestions in 2020.

In light of this uptick in ingestions and the almost immediate adverse chemical reaction upon ingesting a button battery, I am requesting answers to the following questions:

- What current regulations are in place to prevent button battery ingestions?
- To what does your Commission attribute the 93% increase in button battery ingestions?
- Some safety advocates have concerns that button battery ingestions are severely under-reported. Does the Commission share these concerns?
- As more and more devices require button batteries, is your Commission re-evaluating appropriate safety measures?

As a former regulator, I appreciate the delicate balance between consumer safety, personal responsibility, and government intervention. I look forward to your response and would welcome a discussion on appropriate ways to ensure no family endures the nightmare that the Hamsmith family went through. Thank you for your attention to this matter and for the Commission's work to keep our families and communities safe and healthy.

Sincerely,



Jodey C. Arrington  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS